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give lovely woman the monopoly of color, and to make our sombre garb a foil and background to her bright attire? Give us back the days of doublets, ruffs, and velvets—of slashed breeches and nodding plumes! Why are we doomed to perennial black the refuge of abject mediocrity in taste?"

Then my companion made his little speech in answer to me. "There is no lack of causes," said he, "for this modern æsthetic decadence. One of the principal reasons is that the plain clothes of men are a concession to the democratic spirit. Fine dress marked too clearly, for the street, the distinction of the rich from the poor; in times of disorder the mob attacked the gentlemen first, and tore off their fine feathers. The gentlemen concluded, in the course of generations, that it was better to set the fashion of simplicity. The populace cannot abolish wealth, neither can they force rich men to live in poor houses. But it has prevailed on them to dress in such a way as not to offend their pride. The movement began as long ago as the enactment of that sumptuary law of Venice decreeing that the gondolas be stripped of their ornaments, and painted black. The democratic tendency gave us the funeral gondola of to-day, and made possible Shelley's description of it as 'a butterfly of which the chrysalis might have been a coffin.' Like the Venetian gondola, and for the same reason, the European gentleman now appears in black. The Englishman has reacted as far as gray from this mere negation. But the English nobleman is one of the most plainly dressed people in the world, and for that reason, among others, the English aristocracy is the strongest. When slashed breeches come in fashion again, expect the fall of the British Empire."

I made a note of this in my pocket almanac, and we returned to supper. — *T. M. Coan.*

THE MAN IN THE MOON.

VERY very long ago there was a man who went out into the forest one Sunday morning to cut wood. Having chopped a large quantity of brushwood, he tied it together, thrust a stick through the bundle, threw it over his shoulder, and was on his way home, when there met him on the road a comely man, dressed in his Sunday clothes, who was going to church. He stopped, and, accosting the wood-cutter, said: "Dost thou not know that on earth this is Sunday, the day on which God rested from his works, after he had created the world, with all the beasts of the field, and also man? Dost thou not

know what is written in the fourth commandment. 'Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-day?'" The questioner was our Lord himself. The wood-cutter was hardened, and answered: "Whether it is Sunday on earth or Monday (Moonday) in heaven, what does it concern thee or me?" "For this thou shalt for ever bear thy bundle of wood," said the Lord; "and because the Sunday on earth is profaned by thee thou shalt have an everlasting Monday, and stand in the moon, a warning to all such as break the Sunday by work." From that time the man stands in the moon, with his faggot of brushwood, and will stand there to all eternity. — *Yule-Tide Stories.*

OBLIVION.

OBLIVION is not to be hired. The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the flood, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth that of the day, and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetic, which scarce stands one moment. And since death must be the Lucina of life, and even

Pagans doubted, whether to live thus were to die; since our longest sun sets at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness, and have our light in ashes; since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying mementos, and time that grows old in itself, bids us hope no long duration; diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which, notwithstanding, is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and, our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept

raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls—a good way to continue their memories, while having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their past selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind and folly. — *Browne.*



THE RAINY DAY. — JOHN S. DAVIS.

THE RAINY DAY.

THE day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining:
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

— *H. W. Longfellow.*